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Approved water and sewer rate increases take effect January 2014

Rate increases will affect all Evansville Water and Sewer Utility customers

EVANSVILLE, Ind. – The Evansville Water & Sewer Utility (EWSU) reminds customers that a change in water and sewer rates takes effect this month. Rate increases will affect all EWSU customers – residential, commercial, industrial and public authority – although specific impacts vary by meter size and class of user.

“It’s never an easy decision to change rates for Evansville’s Utility customers,” said Mayor Lloyd Winnecke. “The federal and state mandates to upgrade our City’s system and clean our waterways come at a cost. However, investing in these changes only helps to improve Evansville’s current system – which has been neglected for decades – as well as for future generations.”

In February 2013, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission approved incremental water rate increases through 2016, which will fund growing operating expenses and much-needed capital improvements. In 2014, customers will see a 9.2 percent increase in water rates.

During the Sept. 23, 2013, hearing, Evansville City Council approved sewer rate increases for 2014, 2015 and 2016 to help fund state and federally mandated operational improvements to comply with the Clean Water Act and address issues stemming from an aging sewer system. In 2014, a typical residential customer will see a 32 percent increase in sewer rates. Sewer rate increases vary based on customer type, meter size and water volume used.

“We hope our efforts to communicate these changes helps minimize any surprises and underlines the necessity for rate changes to fund needed repairs.” said Allen Mounts, director of EWSU. “Customers can be assured we are dedicated to improving our city’s water and sewer system and complying with state and federal mandates to eliminate the burden of additional fines and penalties.”

How rate increases will impact residential customers in 2014

City residents who use an average of 4,000 gallons of water/month will see their water rates increase from \$16.16 in 2013 to \$17.64 in 2014.

A typical residential customer who uses 4,000 gallons of water/month can expect their sewer bill to increase from \$27.12 in 2013 to \$35.83 in 2014 for inside the City residents and \$36.60 in 2013 to \$48.37 in 2014 for outside the City residents.

Why rate increases are needed now

Evansville has historically underinvested and delayed funding of many capital improvement projects. Increased water rates enable the Utility to invest in much-needed capital improvement projects to reduce water main breaks and system failures, among other important improvements throughout the Utility’s massive infrastructure.

Additionally, EWSU and the City of Evansville have been mandated to proceed with operational improvements to the sewer system specified in a consent decree, a legally binding agreement, with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Justice and Indiana Department of Environmental Management and address combined sewer overflows and other issues stemming from an aging sewer system. The City submitted the Integrated Overflow Control Plan – a proposed 28-year, \$540 million program, known as [Renew Evansville](#) – to the EPA on May 31, 2013, and is awaiting the agency’s feedback and/or approval. Evansville faces fines and penalties for each day it does not meet the terms of the consent decree.

Changes to the customer bill

Starting in January, a new monthly rate charge will appear on customers’ water and sewer utility bills. The “MANDATE” charge is related to Evansville’s federal compliance with the Clean Water Act and went into effect Jan. 1, 2014. This charge represents the amount of the customer’s bill that directly finances the federally and state-mandated projects and is based on the volume of water used.

Financing needed for mandated improvements

Revenue generated from the water rate increase will fund:

- Replacement of several old water main lines throughout the city.
- Relocation of water lines that are in the right of way of road improvement projects.
- Water Monitoring Technology updates to help the Utility meet Water Quality Standards.

- Water tower painting and inspection projects.

Revenue generated from the sewer rate increase will finance improvements mandated by state and federal regulators. Through 2016, \$120 million is needed to fund projects that include:

- \$61.5 million for *Renew Evansville*, the long-term control plan to significantly upgrade Evansville's sewer system and reduce combined sewer overflows and water pollution in our waterways. This will be the City's largest capital improvement project to-date.
- \$52.2 million for increased inspection, maintenance, repairs and "end of life" capital projects.
- \$6.6 million for the final phase of the Cass Avenue sewer separation project to eliminate southeast side flooding.

During the next three years, EWSU will manage more than 100 different projects improving the City's water and sewer system. Planned improvements through 2016 include:

- Green infrastructure solutions to redirect storm water from the Arts District and the Evansville Building Authority parking lot, at Green Trail and Highway 41, and in Jacobsville.
- Design and construction of underdrains at Bee Slough, the open sewer that runs adjacent to Veterans Memorial Highway, to direct standing sewer water to the East Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- A new East Wastewater Treatment Plant effluent pump station.
- North Park separate sanitary sewer improvements to alleviate capacity and refine operations for future improvement projects.
- Cleaning the Pigeon Creek interceptor. This is the system's largest interceptor that collects untreated sewage for the West service area – almost 44,000 cubic feet of sludge is currently stored here.
- Rehabilitation and repair of 23 of the 92 lift stations in the City.
- Numerous capital projects to rehabilitate, replace or improve assets at the Utility's two treatment plants.

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EWSU serves approximately 60,000 customers and operates and maintains approximately 1,000 miles of water mains and more than 800 miles of combined and separated sanitary sewer pipes. On average, the City's system processes and treats approximately 30 million gallons of water per day. More information about the Utility and *Renew Evansville* is available at www.ewsu.com and www.RenewEvansville.com.